Lesson 1: Sample Personal Narrative

**My Pal, Robert**

Have you ever heard the saying, “Hindsight is 20/20?” Well, I don’t think that there is a week that

goes by that that saying isn’t proved to me over and over again. One night this past spring I learned

a little “look before you leap” lesson that taught me to more carefully evaluate the circumstances of

a situation before I actually put myself in it.

I think it’s safe to say that I am a “weirdo magnet.” I firmly believe that when I am at my

most vulnerable, a flashing sign appears on my head that only strange people can see that says,

“TALK TO ME! TALK TO ME!” You may think I’m exaggerating, but trust me, I’m not.

Beginning in the month of April through the month of September, I work for a wonderful

and efficient organization called the Cincinnati Reds. When I first started the job, I wasn’t quite

comfortable driving myself to the stadium, so I had to rely on my mom to drop me off and pick me

up. Since there is never a set time that I get off work, I would have to call my mom and then go wait

for her outside at the service entrance. The approximate time was usually around 11:00 p.m. Usually

there is a trusty security guard named Arnie who works at the service entrance. You know the type,

about sixty-five years old and couldn’t protect you from anything even if he wasn’t sleeping or

missing in action.

So picture this: It’s 11:00 at night, I’m standing outside the service entrance alone, all dressed

up and looking like the perfect target for any psychopath that happens to be in the area. I guess this

might be a good time to describe what it’s like at the service entrance. The tunnel itself is dark, cold,

smelly, and there is always some unidentified substance dripping from the ceiling. At the head of the

tunnel there is a little security guard shack where the smell of a burning illegal substance is often

present. There is also an entrance to the other field, a room for the night (clean-up) crew, and a

metal folding chair where Arnie usually sits when he is around. Around this entrance is reserved

parking for important people and it is generally the place where the night crew hangs out. Now I

don’t want to be mean, but a night crew member who is not on probation of some sort is the

exception to the rule.

Anyway, as you can imagine I was feeling kind of nervous, and of course, Arnie was

nowhere to be found. Normally someone would wait with me for my parents, but the circumstances

were out of the ordinary. As I was standing there outside the service entrance, that horrible feeling

came over me that you get when you feel someone’s eyes on you, and I could see someone coming

towards me out of the corner of my eye. Rather than just stand there awkwardly, I turned face to

face with the person hoping and praying that he wasn’t going to touch me, talk to me, or maybe

ABDUCT me.

When he got about two inches from my face he said hoarsely, “Hi, I’m Robert.” His

breath reeked of alcohol and a mixture of some other things like, oh, I don’t know, garbage? I was

inwardly freaking out. His appearance was even more unsettling. He was a guy about my height, was

wearing a dirty bandana around his head that I think was white at one time, and he had one tooth in

the front of his mouth that had a sign on it that said, “Next tooth—one mile.” “Hi,” I responded,

trying to keep my cool. *Where are you Arnie?* I thought to myself. “What’s your name?” he asked.

*Oh, no, he’s trying to pick up on me!* I thought. I contemplated making up a fake name, but my mind went blank. “Erin,” I responded, while shaking like a leaf.

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